

Appl. No. 10/506,489
Amdt. Dated April 18, 2007
Reply to Office Action of January 18, 2007

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The Office action of January 18, 2007 has been thoroughly studied. Accordingly, the changes presented herein for the application, considered together with the following remarks, are believed to be sufficient to place the application into condition for allowance.

By the present amendment, the limitations of dependent claim 2 have been incorporated into independent claim 1, and dependent claim 2 has been appropriately canceled.

In addition, claims 8 and 14 have been changed to avoid the antecedent basis problems noted by the Examiner on page 2 of the Office Action.

Entry of the changes to the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending in this application.

On page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner has rejected claims 3, 8, 11 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Under this rejection the Examiner has taken the position that claims 3 and 11 are indefinite because there is no basis provided for the molecular weight range (e.g. weight average or number average).

Applicants note that the "molecular weight" referred to in claims 3 and 11 are the weight average molecular weights (Mw) as determined using gel permeation chromatography (GPC) which is a conventional manner of determining molecular weights and can be easily confirmed and supported by the characteristics disclosed in the full paragraph on page 4 of applicant's specification.

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Also under this rejection the Examiner took the position that claims 8 and 14 were indefinite because the phrase "the wet heat treatment" lacked antecedent basis in the claims.

As noted above, claims 8 and 14 have been amended to avoid the antecedent basis problems.

Claims 1, 4-10 and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese reference No. 2001-286743 in view of Japanese reference No. 10-052631 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,355,730 to Kozawa et al.

On page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner has objected to claim 2 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner has otherwise stated that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base and any intervening claim.

As noted above, the limitations of dependent claim 2 have been incorporated into independent claim 1.

Thus, claim 1 presents the limitations of claim 2 in independent form.

Therefore, claim 1 is allowable as noted by the Examiner, together with claims 3-16 which depend therefrom.

In view of the allowability of claim 1 as amended herein, the prior art rejection of claims 1, 4-10 and 13-16 is deemed moot and no comments concerning the cited prior art are believe necessary in the present response.

Entry of the present amendments to the claims and an early allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

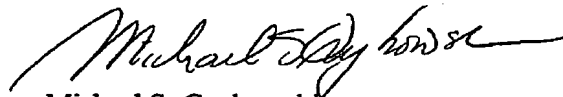
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It is believed that the above represents a complete response to the Official Action and reconsideration is requested.

If upon consideration of the above, the Examiner should feel that there remain outstanding issues in the present application that could be resolved; the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' patent counsel at the telephone number given below to discuss such issues.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136 is hereby made. Please charge the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 12-2136 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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